

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 DHA-02 /058 W  
-----301157Z 049992 /22  
R 292012Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4115

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 2555

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PGOV PFOR SOCI CI  
SUBJECT: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: ONE CHURCH TAKES A POLITICAL  
POSITION  
REF: SANTIAGO 0119

1. SUMMARY: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SHARPLY ATTACKED THE  
LEGITIMACY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN A STATEMENT RELEASED  
MARCH 25. THE OCCASION WAS THE GOC'S DISSOLUTION OF ALL  
POLITICAL PARTIES TWO WEEKS EARLIER, BUT THE CHURCH'S  
CRITIQUE EXTENDED TO MUCH BROADER FEATURES OF THE GOC'S  
RULE. IN EFFECT, THE BISHOPS PRESENTED A POLITICAL PLATFORM FIA-  
METRICALLY OPPOSED TO THE POLICY OF PRESENT MULITARY LEADERSHIP;  
THIS APPEARS TO BE A MAJOR CHALLENGE BY THE CHURCH TO INFLUENCE  
THE GOC. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS  
MET MARCH 18 TO REVIEW THE OC'S DISSOLUTION OF ALL  
PARTIES AND OTHER ACTIONS TAKEN A WEEK EARLUER. THE  
RESULT WAS A DOCUMENT WHICH TOOK MORE THAC HALF A NEWS-  
PAPER PAGE WHEN PQBLISHED MARCH 26. THE HALF DOZEN  
BISHOPS WHO SIGNED THE DOCUMENT (INCLUDING RAUL CARDINAL  
SILVA) REPRESENT A GOOD RANGE OF OPINION; WE CAN BE SURE  
THAT THEY SPEAK FOR MANY OF CHILE'S BISHOPS, ALTHOUGH  
SMME UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD CHANGE EMPHASES OR QUESTION THE  
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TACTICAL WISHDOM OF CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT AT THE  
MOMENT.

3. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SPECIFIC COMMENTS FOLLOWS

(A) HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY: THE STATEMENT  
DEFINED AS ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN HUMANISM."

THE DIGNITY OF THE PERSON, THE PROVULGATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY GOD, MAN'S SUPERIORITY TO THE STATE, AND THE PERSON'S SUPERIORITY OVER THINGS. THE STATEMENT IMPLIED THAT THE JUNTA DOES NOT CONSISTENTLY FOLLOW THESE PRINCIPLES IN ITS ACTIONS, DESPITE ITS CLAIMS TO ACT IN THAT TRADITION.

(B) THE DISAPPEARED: THE COMMITTEE REQUESTED THAT THE PRESIDENT ORDER THE GOVERNMENT TO OFFER ALL COOPERATION TO THE CIVIL JUDICIARY NECESSARY TO CLARIFY ONCE AND FOR ALL WHAT HAPPENED "TO EACH ONE" OF THE PERSONS PRESUMED DISAPPEARED SINCE THE COUP. IF ABUSES WERE COMMITTED, AS MAY BE INEVITABLE, IT IS BEST TO RECOGNIZE THEM AND SEE THAT THEY ARE NOT REPEATED. THIS REQUEST IS A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO PRESIDENT PINOMCHET, WHO MAINTAINS THAT THE GOVERNMENT KNOWS NOTHING OF THE DISAPPEARED AND REACTS IRASCIBLY WHEN THE SUBJECT COMES UP.

(C) PARTIES, POLITICIANS AND NATIONAL UNITY:  
WHILE RECOGNIZING THE VALIDITY OF GOC CRITICISM OF PARTIES, AND POLITICIANS, THE BISHOPS SAY THEY PLAYED AN HONORABLE PART IN CHILEAN HISTORY, AND WERE PART OF THE COUNTRY'S TRADITION AND LEGAL CHARACTER OF THE NATION, SO OFTEN INVOKED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE STATEMENT FAVORED POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING, THE RIGHT AND DUTY OF CITIZENS TO INTEREST THEMSELVES IN PUBLIC POLICY (A CLEAR REFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC (PDC) PLATFORM DOCUMENTS CITED BY THE GOC AS SUBVERSIVE), AND PLURALISM AND THE RIGHT TO DISSENT. IT  
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CONCLUDED THAT "THE WAY TO PEACE AND UNITY CANNOT BE IMPOSED."

(D) FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: A NATIONAL CONSENSUS CANNOT BE FORMED WITHOUT SUCH FREEDOM, NOR CAN THE CHURCH PERMIT RESTRICTIONS THAT LIMIT ITS LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND TEACH ITS DOCTRINE.

(E) ECONOMIC SITUATION: THE CHURCH HAS MADE CLEAR ITS UNHAPPINESS WITH THE ECONOMIC SITUATION UNDER THE JUNTA AND HAS CRITICIZED GOC POLICIES. THE BISHOPS WENT FURTHER THIS TIME, INSISTING ON THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING ON THE ECONOMY; "IN THE NAME OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND IN THE NAME OF THE RIGHT OF PARTICIPATION, THE CHURCH REQUESTS ..." THAT ECONOMIC OPTIONS BE DISCUSSED OPENLY, THAT ACCESS BE OPENED TO DECISION MAKING, AND THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF EXERCISING PRESSURE NOT BE RESERVED TO "ONE SCIENTIFIC SCHOOL" (I.E., THE CHICAGO BOYS) OR PRIVILEGED ECONOMIC

GROUPS.

(F) THE EMERGENCY. THE BISHOPS EXPRESSED HOPE FOR AN END TO THE "CLIMATE OF EMERGENCY" (I.E., EMERGENCY POWERS) NOW MORE THAN THREE YEARS OLD SO THAT "A JURIDICAL ORDER ACCEPTED BY THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY" COULD BE SECURED AND THAT "ALL CHILEANS OF GOOD WILL" COULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTRY.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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-----301159Z 050046 /22

R 292012Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4116

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 2555

(G) THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAW: IN WHAT IS PROBABLY THE STRONGEST SENTENCE IN THE DOCUMENT, THE BISHOPS "BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL NOT BE FULL GUARANTEES OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AS LONG AS THE COUNTRY HAS NO CONSTITUTION, OLD OR NEW, RATIFIED BY POPULAR SUFFRAGE, WHILE LAWS ARE NOT MADE BY THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITIZENRY, AND WHILE ALL ORGANS OF THE STATE, FROM THE HIGHEST TO THE LOWEST, ARE NOT SUBMITTED TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAW." THIS SENTENCE QUESTIONS THE VERY LEGITIMACY OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE LAST POINT IS A CLEAR REFERENCE TO THE JUNTA, THE SECRET POLICE, AND PINOCHET.

4. COMMENT: THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE'S DOCUMENT IS THE CHURCH'S TOUGHEST CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DATE. MOREOVER, IT IS CLEARLY POLITICAL, ALTHOUGH IT IS CLAD IN MORAL AND PASTORAL TERMINOLOGY. IN APPEARANCE, IT SEEMS TO APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW THE PATH LAID OUT IN THE EXTENSIVE QUOTES FROM GOC POLICY STATEMENTS, AND PARTICULARLY PINOCHET'S MARCH 18 SPEECH (SANTIAGO 2251). INDEED, THE SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE

TOLD EMBOFFS THIS WAS THE INTENTION. BUT HE WAS DIS-  
INGENUOUS. THE JUXT POSITION OF GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS  
WITH CHURCH DOCTRINAL AND POLICY STATEMENTS AND THE  
COMMENTS MADE, SHOWED IRONY THAT BORDERED ON SARCASM.  
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THE AIM WAS TO PUSH THE GOVERNMENT HARD, AND PINOCHET  
WAS PERSONALLY A FREQUENT TARGET. THE BISHOPS PICKED  
UP THE WORDS THE GOC USES SO OFTEN AND GAVE THEM A  
DIFFERENT SIGNIFICANCE. CLEARLY, THE GOVERNMENT IN THE  
CHURCH'S VIEW IS MISUSING THE WORDS.

5. THREE MONTHS AGO (SANTIAGO 0119), THE BISHOPS DECIDED  
TO ADOPT A LOW PROFILE TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT. TWO WEEKS  
AGO THE GOVERNMENT CHANGED THE RULES AND OPENED THE WAY  
FOR A BURST OF PENT-UP CRITICISM. PREVIOUSLY, THE CHRISTIAN  
DEMOCRATS HAD JUDGED THAT THEY COULD CARRY OUT AT LEAST SOME  
MINIMAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY DESPITE THE  
POLITICAL RECESS. THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT THE UNHRC  
MEETING IN GENEVA WAS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF TOUGHENING IN  
THE GOC POSITION AT HOME AND SEEMINGLY WAS USED TO JUSTIFY  
THE DISSOLUTION DECISION. THAT DECISION RESULTED IN  
THE CHURCH'S REVERSAL OF TACTICS.

6. WHAT CAN FOLLOW THIS ACT? THE CHURCH IS NOW THE ONE  
POWERFUL SOCIAL VOICE IN CHILE THAT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE  
GOVERNMENT. THE PARTIES, THE LABOR MOVEMENT, THE ARMED FORCES  
THEMSELVES, THE UNIVERSITIES, THE BUREAUCRACY -- ALL ARE SILENCED  
OR CONTROLLED. THE CHURCH TAKES SOME RISK WHEN IT ENTERS THE  
POLITICAL ARENA, AND IT CANNOT MAKE STATEMENTS LIKE THIS  
OFTEN. THE GOVERNMENT MAY TRY TO REPLY BY SILENCE --  
THUS THE GOC'S "EL CRONISTA" DID NOT REPORT THE BISHOPS'  
DOCUMENTS. BUT THE BISHOPS INTEND THE DOCUMENT TO  
ORIENT THE FAITHFUL, AND IT MAY REKINDLE THE  
CRITICISM OF THE GOC THAT APPEARED WHEN POLITICAL PARTIES WERE  
DISSOLVED. PINOCHET'S MARCH 18 SPEECH TENED TO CALM THE WATERS,  
BUT THE BISHOPS NOW HAVE AGITATED THEM ONCE MORE.  
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## Message Attributes

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